

Garstang Community Academy

Reading Newsletter, Autumn 2021

“Read to succeed”



Welcome to the first GCA Reading Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you abreast of the activities used to support reading across the school, as well as handy hints and tips to use at home.

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www.garstangcommunityacademy.com/learning/study-centre/reading-at-gca

Why read?

At GCA, we are committed to reading. It is the master skill of a school. Put simply, we cannot do without it: developing a solid reading habit is the key to success. On average, 25% of children begin high school below the expected reading age; 20% of those who are below expected are likely to score no more than a grade 4 at GCSE. Indeed, students who do not read regularly struggle to have a reading age of 13 by the time they sit their GCSEs, thus limiting their progress and achievement. Startling statistics aside, it obvious that children who do not read struggle to grow academically.

So, what can we do about this? The answer is easy. Read. Read - and then read some more. The benefits are incredible. Readers make better writers and communicators, having a vast arsenal of vocabulary at their fingertips. It allows students to discover new things and educate themselves; the right books are full of useful information that helps us become smarter, sharper, more skilled and more open to new ideas. Through reading, our imagination is ignited, and we open up our minds to new possibilities. Even non-fiction books on science and technology have the power to stir our creativity and stimulate innovative and inventive ideas. It gives your brain a workout, too, improving memory and cognitive function – the benefits continue long after you have put down that book.

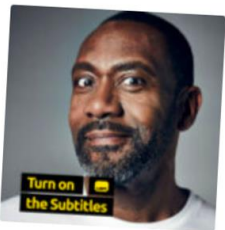
Put simply, developing a solid reading habit helps you to succeed in the following areas:

- Vocabulary
- Understanding of grammar
- Spelling skill
- Writing attainment
- Attitudes to reading and writing
- Knowledge and understanding of the world and other people
- Achievement in other subjects, including maths
- Empathy and understanding of emotions
- Development of our sense of 'self' and identity

It does not matter what you read: crime fiction, cookery books, pig manuals, whatever. As long as you can become completely engrossed in a book, you can escape the everyday stress that you are experiencing in your life and step into someone else's world for a while. A mere 6 minutes of reading a day can reduce stress by up to 68%, as well as being good in helping develop healthy sleep patterns.

Lastly, and most importantly, reading is fun. Rather than gluing your eyes to the phone or to the television screen, read the lines on the page of a new book. Instead of growing envious of someone's picture perfect Instagram, transport yourself into the magical land of your favourite book and its characters. Rather than constantly damaging your brain cells with mindless scrolling or streaming, repair some of those cells and read.

Make TV time a reading time



Sir Lenny Henry

“ Just turn on the subtitles. Extraordinary. Research has shown they can double the chances of a child becoming good at reading ”

What takes 10 seconds, costs nothing, and could help change a child's life forever? Research tells us that one of the best ways of improving literacy is by following texts while the words are read aloud. One quick, simple, and free idea is to **simply turn on the subtitles** when watching TV or any online video – this can double the chances of a child becoming proficient at reading. A key finding of eye-tracking research on subtitling, which studies the automatic reading behaviour of children and adults, is that viewers who have some decoding ability – even partial letter-to-sound correspondence – just cannot ignore the subtitles and will exhibit automatic reading responses.

For more information, follow this link: <https://turnonthesubtitles.org/>

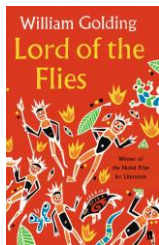
‘Young viewers prefer TV subtitles, research suggests’ – BBC News, 15th November, 2021: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-59259964>

GCA Literary Canon

Last year, we launched the GCA Literary Canon. The Canon is a collection of texts that have been chosen to be deliberately challenging to our students. Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning during AM registration, Ys 7-10 read together for 30 minutes, which is more than the recommended 20 minutes to improve reading. During this time the form tutor will read aloud to the class while the students follow the text. They will then be given the opportunity to explore the big ideas in the text and learn more about what it can teach us about the world. The purpose of this is to improve the reading ability of our students but also to broaden their horizons in terms of their cultural capital. Over the course of the year, each student will read a classic, a modern novel and work of literary non-fiction.

This term, our students have been reading the following:

Y7 – *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding



First published in 1954, this novel is now regarded as a classic; a compelling story about a group of very ordinary small boys marooned on a desert island. At first it seems as though it is all going to be great fun, but this is short lived as the island turns into a nightmarish and primitive world of panic and death.

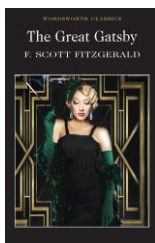
Y8 – *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon



This novel is a murder mystery story like no other. The detective, and narrator, is Christopher Boone. Christopher is fifteen and has Asperger's, a form of autism. He has never gone further than the end of the road on his own, but when he finds a neighbour's dog murdered he sets off on a terrifying journey that will turn his whole world upside down.

Y9 – *The Great Gatsby* by F Scott Fitzgerald

Young, handsome and fabulously rich, Jay Gatsby is the bright star of the Jazz Age. His parties are legendary, his reputation mixed. This novel explores the idea of the American Dream and poses some complex questions about love, social class and morality.



Y10 – *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

This haunting vision of the future, tells the story of Offred, living in the Republic of Gilead. As a female, her only function is to breed. If she refuses, she will be hung or sent out to die slowly of radiation sickness. Offred's journey is one of isolation and fear but ultimately bravery in the face of oppression.



GCA Digital Library

In October, we launched the GCA Digital Library with students in a whole school assembly. Students can access this resource by clicking on the 'Reading at GCA' tab on the homepage of the school website, and then clicking the link that follows ('GCA Digital Library'). This will take them to: <https://garstangcommunityacademy.eplatform.co/browse>. The digital library is incredibly simple to use. Your child has their own log in details using their name which look like this:

Username: **Joe.Bloggs** (no spaces, but capital letters and the full stop are necessary)

Password: **library1** (all lower case)

Once they have logged in, students have access to an app that will allow them to borrow books and read them online on a computer, phone or tablet. The apps can be downloaded via the following links (search 'eplatform by Wheelers'):

IOS: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/eplatform-by-wheelers/id912668852?mt=8>


Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.eplatform.android.googleplay&hl=en>

Windows: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/store/p/eplatform/9nblggh3z38kY>

Once your child has accessed the website/app, they will have access to over **2000 books for reading, and 900 audiobooks**. It works as any standard library, so your child will be able to borrow the book for two weeks, but will also be able to request titles already on loan to other students, as well as renewing the book that they are currently reading.

Word of the Week

Each week we have a word of the week across school, with each department suggesting words on a rotation. Students are encouraged to use this word, to build their vocabulary, as well as for reward points. There is also a French translation to support learning in MFL and to recognise the role of foreign languages within our own.



Inhibit


(verb)

- hinder, restrain, or prevent (an action or process).
- make (someone) self-conscious and unable to act in a relaxed and natural way.

Etymology: from Latin *inhibere* 'hinder', from *in* - 'in' + *habere* 'hold' (In a hold)

Sentences containing the word 'inhibit' in different forms:

- A zone of inhibition (adj) on a petri dish is an area where bacteria will not grow.
- She wanted to inhibit (verb) his progress in the competition.
- He had many inhibitions (noun) which hindered his promotion.



Synonyms

- Impede
- Constrain
- Repress

Antonyms

- Promote
- Facilitate
- Assist

French translation:
Inhiber (Verb)



WIKI



Each student has been supplied with a WIKI (What I Know I will use) bookmark to help recognise patterns in words and to make links across the language. This is a cross curricular tool that will help build tier three and subject specific vocabulary by learning to recognise root words, as well as common prefixes and suffixes. In lessons, students are challenged to work out the meaning of a word by using these.



AMBITIOUS VOCABULARY CHALLENGE
Can you decipher the meaning of this word?

patriarchy

Latin prefix 'pater': father

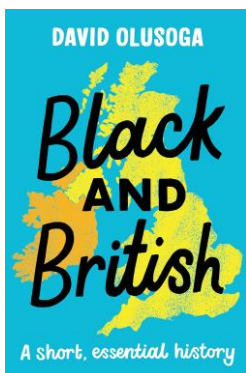
Latin suffix 'archia', from the Greek 'arkhia': to rule

Meaning = system of society or government by fathers or elder males of the community

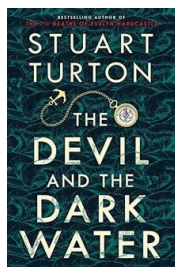
Extension
What would the opposite of 'patriarchy' be?

Recommended Reads

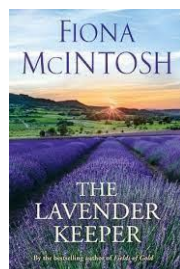
We have asked staff across the school to suggest their recommended reads for students. This is what they suggest:



Mrs Howarth recommends ***Black and British: A Short Essential History*** by David Olusoga
 "It has been written especially for secondary school children and concisely explores the much-overlooked history of Black peoples in Britain and beyond. We live in a diverse society with many of us belonging to families with different skin colours and ethnicities; Black British history is our history and helps us to make sense of who we are today. The book answers many questions such as 'When did Africans first come to Britain?' and 'Why did the American Civil War disrupt the Industrial Revolution?' as well as explaining modern Black history such as the Windrush scandal. It is the book Olusoga wishes he'd been given when he was a teenager; the books he read never told him of the likes of Henry 'Box' Brown, Olaudah Equiano, Walter Tull and Sam King. This book sets the record straight in a clear and easy to read style. It complements our studies in English; for example, our study of *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman and various poetry units, too. It is also the perfect companion to our History and RE curriculum."



Mrs Illman recommends ***The Devil and the Dark Water*** by Stuart Turton
 "From the writer of the equally brilliant *The Seven Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle*, this is a thrilling murder mystery worthy of Sherlock Holmes, set on a 17th Century merchant ship. Sherlock Holmes meets Treasure Island!"



Mrs Rainbow recommends ***The Lavender Keeper*** by Fiona McIntosh
 "Lavender farmer Luc Bonet is raised by a wealthy Jewish family in the foothills of the French Alps. When the Second World War breaks out he joins the French Resistance, leaving behind his family's fortune, their home overrun by soldiers, their lavender fields in disarray..."

For further recommendations, follow these links below:

[Log in or join Lancashire County Libraries](#)

[Love Reading 4 Kids](#) - for book lists by age group and interests

[Fantastic Fiction](#) - for the latest news on fiction books for all ages - 30,000 authors and 350,000 books

[Book Trust](#) - transforms lives by getting children and families reading

[Who Else Writes Like...?](#) - A guide to children's authors